NHVR fatigue rules for truck drivers: which hours apply to you

Fatigue and work diary · checked 7 Nov 2026

If you drive a truck over 12 t GVM, the NHVR fatigue rules limit how long you work and how much rest you take. Most drivers work standard hours. Accredited operators can use BFM or AFM until their NHVAS accreditation expires, or ACA-Fatigue hours under the new accreditation scheme. Whatever your hours, you must not drive while fatigued.

Who the fatigue rules apply to

The work and rest limits apply to drivers of fatigue-regulated heavy vehicles:

- a vehicle with a GVM over 12 t
- a combination where the total GVM/GCM is over 12 t
- a truck over 12 t GVM with a machine or implement attached
- a bus over 4.5 t GVM that carries more than 12 adults, including the driver

New from 1 August 2026

You must not drive any heavy vehicle over 4.5 t GVM while impaired by fatigue or unfit to drive - even if you are inside your work and rest hours.

Which hours apply to you

You can only work under one hours option at a time.

Hours option	Who can use it	Where the limits are
Standard hours	Any driver. No accreditation needed.	The tables below
BFM hours	Drivers for an operator with NHVAS BFM accreditation, until it expires, is cancelled or they move to HVA	The NHVR's BFM hours
AFM hours	Drivers for an operator with NHVAS AFM accreditation, until it expires, is cancelled or they move to HVA	The operator's AFM certificate
ACA-Fatigue hours	Drivers for an operator with ACA-Fatigue accreditation	The operator's ACA-Fatigue certificate
Exemption hours	Drivers covered by a fatigue exemption permit or notice	The exemption's conditions

BFM and AFM are closed to new applicants. New operators wanting different hours apply for ACA-Fatigue under the Heavy Vehicle Accreditation scheme.

Standard hours - solo truck drivers

In any period of	Work no more than	Rest at least
5 hours	5 hours	15 continuous minutes
8 hours	7 hours 30 minutes, in blocks of	15 continuous minutes
11 hours	10 hours 60 minutes, in blocks of	15 continuous minutes
24 hours	12 hours	7 continuous hours of stationary rest
7 days	72 hours	24 continuous hours of stationary rest
14 days	144 hours	4 night rest breaks, 2 of them on consecutive days

- Stationary rest is time out of the truck, or in an approved sleeper berth while the truck is stopped.
- A night rest break is 7 continuous hours of stationary rest between 10 pm and 8 am, or 24 continuous hours of stationary rest.

Two-up drivers have their own standard hours and BFM hours, and the truck needs an approved sleeper berth.

When you need a work diary

Local work means you stay within a 100 km radius of your base for the whole journey. Whether you need a diary for local work depends on your hours.

Your hours	Local work (within 100 km of base)	Going more than 100 km from base
Standard hours	No work diary - your record keeper keeps your work and rest records	Work diary - from the start of the journey
BFM, AFM, ACA-Fatigue or exemption hours	Work diary - every shift	Work diary - every shift

Counting time

- Count forward from the end of a rest break.
- Use the time zone of your base, even when you cross a border.
- In a written work diary, record time in 15-minute blocks.

Changing hours options

- From standard or BFM hours: you can change if you fully meet the limits of the new option, or after a 48-hour reset break.
- From AFM, ACA-Fatigue or exemption hours: you need a reset break of at least 48 continuous hours, or the reset shown on your certificate, permit or notice.

WA and NT

The Heavy Vehicle National Law doesn't apply in Western Australia or the Northern Territory. They have their own fatigue rules - check them before you work there.

It's not just the driver

Schedulers, loaders, consignors and anyone else in the chain of responsibility must not cause or encourage a driver to break these limits. Drivers must be able to stop when they need to.

General information, not legal advice.

Sources

NHVR - Work and rest hours - https://www.nhvr.gov.au/safety-accreditation-compliance/fatigue-management/work-and-rest-hours

NHVR - Fatigue management - https://www.nhvr.gov.au/safety-accreditation-compliance/fatigue-management

NHVR - Work diary - https://www.nhvr.gov.au/safety-accreditation-compliance/fatigue-management/work-diary